



For Immediate Release
July 29, 2010

Invade the invaders in Radium on August 10

Pull out nasty tansy and threatening thistle, refreshments are provided

Radium Hot Springs, B.C. — The gloves are coming ON and it's going to be a heck of a fight. On Tuesday, August 10, volunteers will come out in force to identify and yank out invasive plants from sensitive areas around the Columbia Wetlands near Radium Hot Springs.

Radium's Community Weed Pull will be a surgical strike against invaders like Common Tansy—with its tough seeds that remain viable for decades—and prickly Canada Thistle, and *everyone* is invited to join in between 9 am and noon on August 10.

“The native plant ecology of the Columbia Wetlands is under threat from invasive species,” said Rachel Darvill, event coordinator. Darvill is in charge of Wildsight's Columbia Headwaters Invasive Plant Species Project (CHIPSP). “But many hands can help restore it.”

Darvill said snacks and refreshments will be provided, along with gloves and plastic bags. “And don't worry if you don't know a tansy from a fir tree—we'll be joined by members of the East Kootenay Invasive Plant Council to help us identify the plants.”

Volunteers will meet on Forsters Landing Road, just past the mill on the north side of the road before it intersects with the Columbia Wetlands. They will focus on a patch on Common Tansy that is “known to (weed) police.” If time permits, volunteers will move to Sinclair Creek to attack a patch of tansy there.

“This year we'll return to a huge patch that we pulled last year to mop up reemerging growth,” Darvill said, noting that invasive plant reduction is an ongoing process that demands prioritizing areas. “This infestation is very close to the Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area and we don't want it to spread into that sensitive wetland ecosystem. There's a dramatic reduction in the amount of Common Tansy at the location compared to last year. But its seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 25 years, so we need to revisit it.”

Darvill said many non-native plant species are pretty—but deadly. “People still have invasive plants in their own backyards,” she said. “Some are very attractive plants. In fact, many first came to Canada through the horticultural trade.

“But with no natural predators, they steal space, moisture and nutrients from native plants.”

Invasive plants are a different order from mere weeds, Darvill said. They have been assessed by biologists and are proven to have a number of unwanted effects. “They destroy wildlife habitat, degrade the scenic beauty of the landscape, disrupt recreational activities, ruin agricultural areas, reduce biodiversity and degrade water quality—among other things.”

Darvill said the Radium weed pull will help people tell noxious weeds from an innocuous ones—“So volunteers will be armed with the knowledge to go back to their yards and do some culling, if necessary.”

In addition to coordinating the weed pull, Wildsight runs an in-depth invasive plant program in the Columbia Wetlands and on the West Bench of the Columbia Valley.

“We’re collecting baseline information on both terrestrial and aquatic invasive plants in the Columbia Valley,” Darvill said. “And we’re pulling the invasive plants that were mapped in previous years’ inventories.

“This year we’ll ramp up our efforts to include aquatic plant surveys on some of the major recreational lakes in the valley.”

The program is funded by Columbia Basin Trust, the Columbia Wetland Stewardship Partners, the McLean Foundation and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District.

“Invasive plants are spreading rapidly and we need to help stop the spread,” Darvill said. “By pulling them we can help maintain native plant growth and a healthy ecosystem. It’s a good way to give back to the wetlands that give us so much.”

Weed pull volunteers needing more info, or anyone wanting to help the work of the Columbia Headwaters Invasive Plant Species Project, can contact Rachel Darvill at 250-344-4961 or Rachel@Wildsight.ca.

Radium’s Community Weed Pull • August 10, 2010 • 9 am to noon • Meet at Forsters Landing Road, just past the mill on the north side of the road before it intersects with the Columbia Wetlands • Call 250-344-4961 for further details.

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About Wildsight • www.Wildsight.ca

Wildsight works locally, regionally and globally to protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable communities in Canada's Columbia and southern Rocky Mountain region. This area is internationally recognized as a keystone to conservation in western North America.

Contact

Rachel Darvill, Upper Columbia Program Coordinator
250.344.4961 • Rachel@Wildsight.ca